BEN REILLY:
THE SCARLET SPIDER™
#1
DAVID
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Years ago, Miles Warren, one of Peter Parker's college professors, stole a sample of Peter's genetic material and used it to create a perfect clone of Spider-Man. With all of Peter's memories, the clone fled. Created, not born, and without an identity of his own, he gave himself a new name and made his own way in the world as…

BEN REILLY: THE SCARLET SPIDER

After seemingly sacrificing himself to save Peter Parker's life, Ben Reilly was resurrected by none other than his creator, ***the Jackal***, and subjected to dozens of torturous experiments.

The procedures drove him quite mad, and Ben soon broke free. He took the title of the Jackal and all the technology that came with it for himself, and began to resurrect anyone who had lost their lives as a result of Spider-Man's actions (or inactions). With an eye on global influence, Ben built himself a pharmaceutical company, and used his technology to "cure" hundreds of people. In actuality, he had simply swapped his patients with clones, with neither their knowledge nor consent.

Unwilling to let Ben toy with the power to create life, Spider-Man destroyed his entire facility, and Ben himself seemed to be killed in the blast.

Unbeknownst to Spider-Man, however, Ben survived. Now he just needs to figure out what to do next…

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SO MANY PEOPLE COME THROUGH HERE TO BEGIN A NEW LIFE. FIND A NEW CHANCE. START EVERYTHING OVER AGAIN.
WHY NOT ME, THEN? WHY NOT *BEN REILLY?*
SHOULDN'T I HAVE THE SAME OPPORTUNITIES AS EVERYBODY ELSE? SHOULDN'T I BE ABLE TO CHANGE MY NAME, BECOME SOMEONE NEW?
LIKE THIS SNAPPY NEW COSTUME. MAN. THIS THING FITS GREAT.
AND THAT COSPLAYER I TOOK IT OFF...HELL, HE WON'T MISS IT. I MEAN, HE MADE UP HIS VERY OWN SPIDER-MAN COSTUME, AND WHAT DID I DO? I MADE IT *OFFICIAL.*
I MEAN, YEAH, OKAY, I LEFT HIM LYING NAKED IN A RESTROOM AT THE HOTEL, BUT HELL. *I* DIDN'T TELL HIM TO GO COMMANDO WHILE WEARING A TIGHT-FITTING COSTUME. WHAT WAS HE, SHOWING OFF?
AT LEAST WEAR A DANCE BELT, DUDE. THERE'S STUFF WE JUST DON'T NEED TO SEE ON A FRIDAY NIGHT.
WOW. YOU CAN REALLY SEE THE WHOLE STRIP FROM HERE.

GOD, I MISS NEW YORK. WHAT DOES IT SAY ABOUT ME WHEN THE CLOSEST I CAN COME TO IT IS THE "NEW YORK, NEW YORK" HOTEL AND CASINO IN *LAS VEGAS?*

OKAY, SO...WHAT NOW? HOW DO I LIVE MY LIFE?

I'VE GOT A CRAPPY ROOM AT A CRAPPY MOTEL AND NOT MUCH MONEY TO MY NAME. PETER THOUGHT HE HAD MONEY PROBLEMS AT THE BEGINNING? AT LEAST HE HAD A HOUSE. LOVING AUNT AND UNCLE.

I'VE GOT NOBODY.

THAT'S NOT TRUE. YOU HAVE ME.

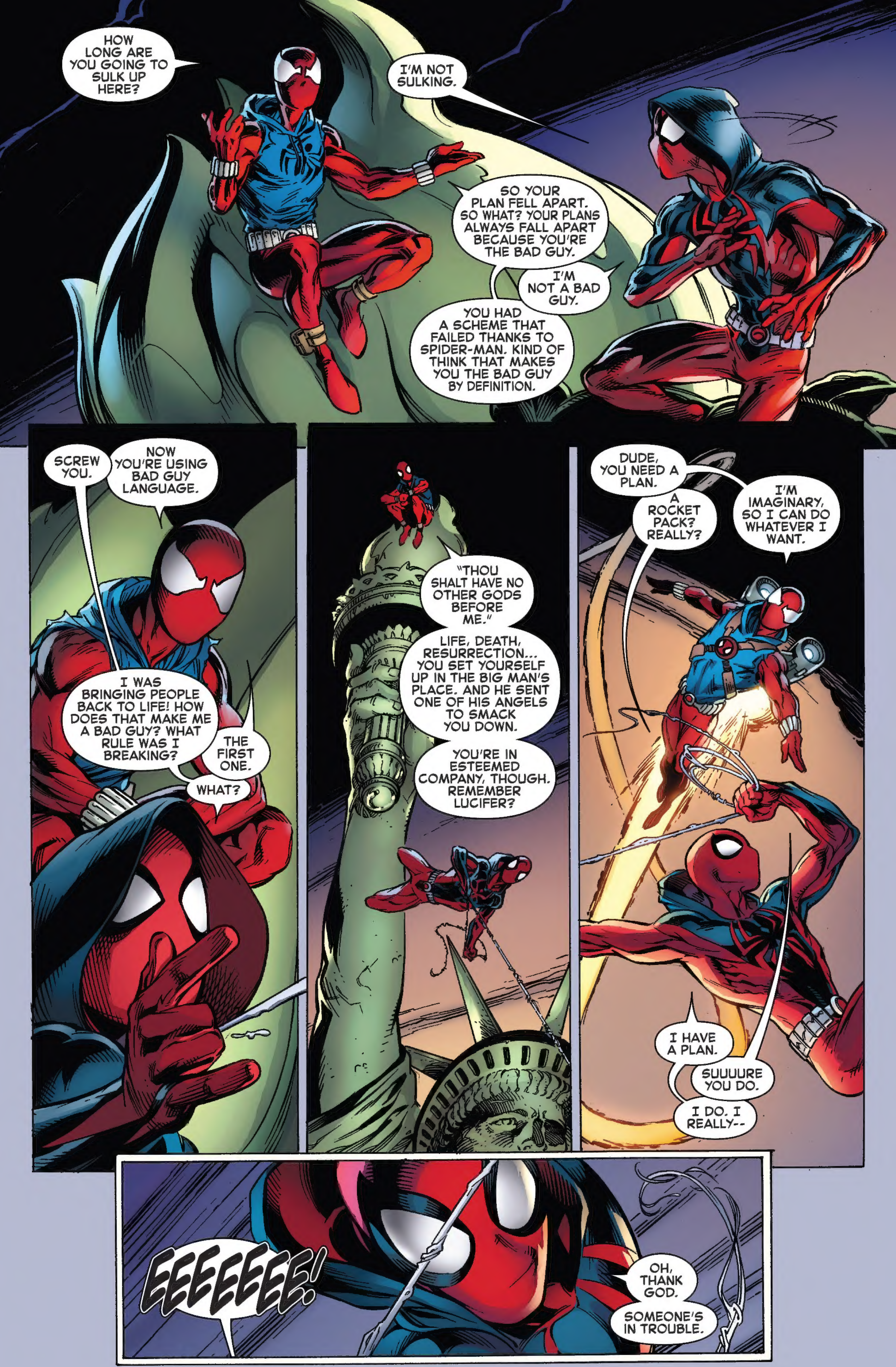
YOU DON'T COUNT.

OF COURSE I COUNT!

ONE... TWO...

YOU'RE HILARIOUS.

AREN'T I, THOUGH?


HOW LONG ARE YOU GOING TO SULK UP HERE?
I'M NOT SULKING.
SO YOUR PLAN FELL APART. SO WHAT? YOUR PLANS ALWAYS FALL APART BECAUSE YOU'RE THE BAD GUY.
I'M NOT A BAD GUY.
YOU HAD A SCHEME THAT FAILED THANKS TO SPIDER-MAN. KIND OF THINK THAT MAKES YOU THE BAD GUY BY DEFINITION.
SCREW YOU.
NOW YOU'RE USING BAD GUY LANGUAGE.
I WAS BRINGING PEOPLE BACK TO LIFE! HOW DOES THAT MAKE ME A BAD GUY? WHAT RULE WAS I BREAKING?
THE FIRST ONE.
WHAT?
"THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME."
LIFE, DEATH, RESURRECTION... YOU SET YOURSELF UP IN THE BIG MAN'S PLACE. AND HE SENT ONE OF HIS ANGELS TO SMACK YOU DOWN.
YOU'RE IN ESTEEMED COMPANY, THOUGH. REMEMBER LUCIFER?
DUDE, YOU NEED A PLAN.
A ROCKET PACK? REALLY?
I'M IMAGINARY, SO I CAN DO WHATEVER I WANT.
I HAVE A PLAN.
SUUUURE YOU DO.
I DO. I REALLY--
EEEEEEE!
OH, THANK GOD.
SOMEONE'S IN TROUBLE.

GET AWAY! GET AWAY! OR--!
OR WHAT?
HEY! DO YOU HAVE A COSTUME?
WH-WHAT?!
A COSTUME. YOU KNOW. TIGHTS. OR ARMOR.
OR MAYBE A MORE IMPRESSIVE WEAPON THAN, Y'KNOW, A KNIFE.
I MEAN, YOU'RE THE FIRST BAD GUY I'M FIGHTING IN LAS VEGAS. I'D KIND OF LIKE IT IF YOU HAD SOMETHING MORE THREATEN--
THEEEERE WE GO! NOW WE'RE TALKING!
GET OUTTA HERE, SPIDER-MAN!
NOT SPIDER-MAN. THE SCARLET SPIDER.
NO REGRETS
BLAAAM
DON'T CALL ME "SPIDER-MAN" AGAIN.
BECAUSE IF YOU DO...
WUNK
...IT WON'T GO WELL FOR YOU.

Unhhh...
WOW. PRETTY GOOD GUN.
NICE HEFT.
WHERE'D YOU GET IT?
PUT IT DOWN. I THOUGHT YOU DIDN'T USE GUNS. YOU'RE SPIDER-M...
BLAAM BLAAM
EEEEYARRRHHH!
I WARNED HIM. CAN'T SAY I DIDN'T WARN HIM.
YOU HEARD ME WARN HIM, RIGHT?
Y-YES...
WELL, THERE Y'GO.
KNOW WHAT THEY NEED IN HERE? A SLOT MACHINE.
IT'S VEGAS. YOU SHOULDN'T BE ABLE TO GO 20 FEET WITHOUT SEEING A SLOT MACHINE, RIGHT?
THAT'S... YES.
SEE, I KNEW I LIKED YOU. YOUR NAME WOULDN'T BE MARY JANE, WOULD IT? OR GWEN?
MANDY.
HEY, MANDY. NAME'S BEN. BUT KEEP THAT TO YOURSELF.

I...I REALLY DON'T KNOW HOW TO THANK YOU. HOW I CAN REPAY YOU...?
A HUNDRED BUCKS.

I'M SORRY?
GIVE ME A HUNDRED BUCKS, WE'LL CALL IT SQUARE.

I ONLY HAVE 50. I'M OUT OF WORK AND MONEY'S SO TIGHT.
IF I CAN GET A JOB, I CAN REPAY YOU...

OKAY. WE'LL DO IT THAT WAY.
AND MANDY...
IF YOU TRY TO BACK OUT OF THE DEAL...IF YOU TRY TO STIFF ME...
IT WON'T GO WELL FOR YOU.

MANDY?

Yes...?
TAKE THE GUN.
WHAT?!

THERE YA GO! NICE HEFT, RIGHT?
I...I'VE NEVER HELD A GUN.
WELL, YOU JUST GOT MUGGED, SO KEEP IT IN YOUR PURSE. AFTER ALL...
O... OKAY.

...YOU NEVER KNOW WHO YOU'RE GOING TO RUN INTO.
UHHH...
...THANKS?

SAN FRANCISCO.
NOW WHERE THE HELL ARE MY KEYS? I SWEAR TO GOD, RITA...

...YOU'D LOSE YOUR DAMNED HEAD IF IT WEREN'T SCREWED...

...ON...?

OH...MY GOD.
GOOD TO SEE YOU, RITA. LIKE WHAT YOU'VE DONE WITH YOUR HAIR.

JACKAL!
MISS ME?

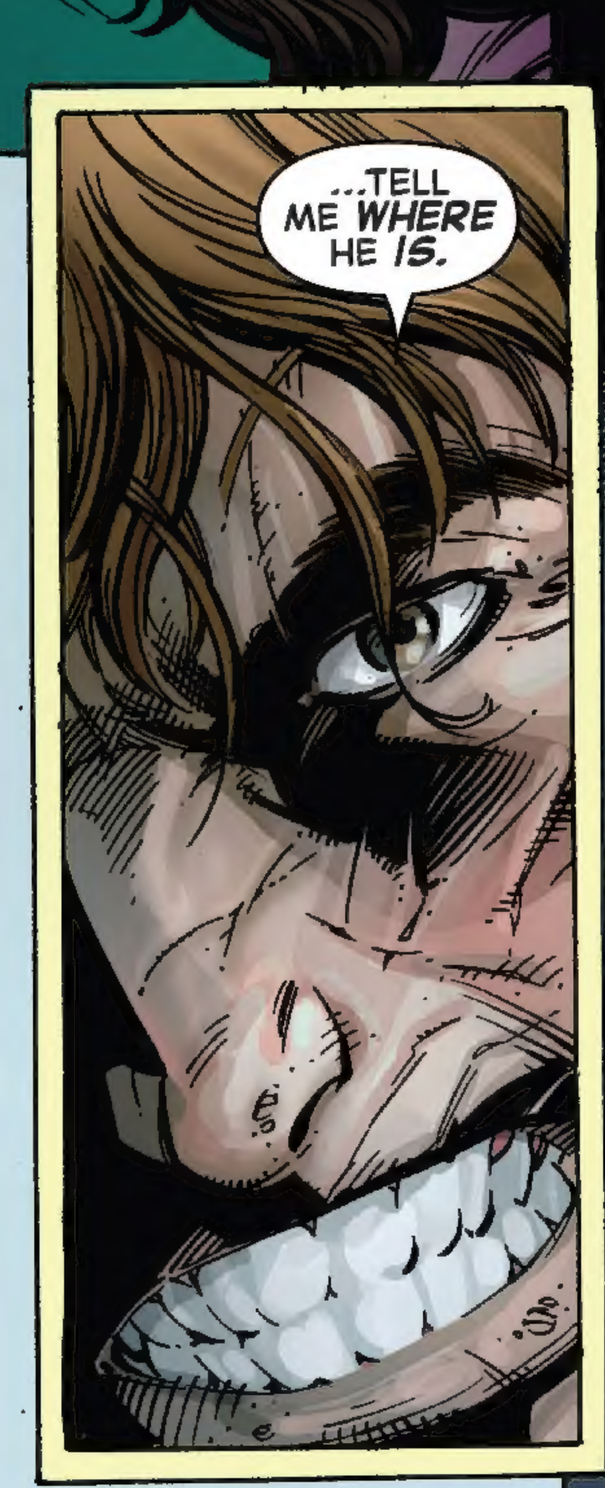
OF COURSE I'VE MISSED YOU!
WHEN YOU SAID YOU WERE GOING AWAY, I THOUGHT I'D NEVER SEE YOU AGAIN!

REALLY. AND WHERE DID I TELL YOU I WAS GOING?
WHAT? WHAT KIND OF ODD QUESTION IS TH--?

HOLD IT. WHAT'S...?

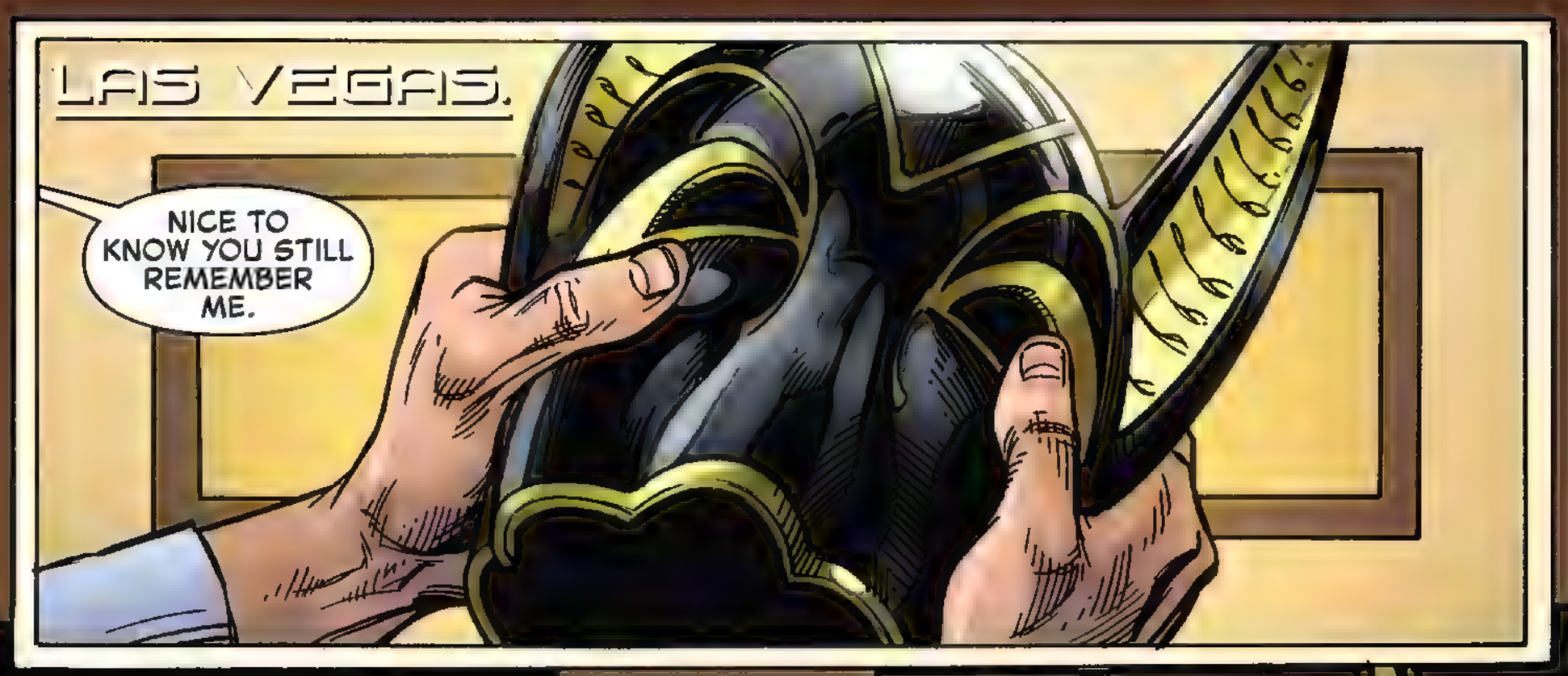
YOUR SCARS...THEY'VE CHANGED. BUT THAT'S IMPOSS...
YOU'RE NOT THE JACKAL! YOU'RE--

KAINE. THAT'S RIGHT.
THANKS FOR CONFIRMING FOR ME WHAT I SUSPECTED. HE'S ALIVE. NOW...

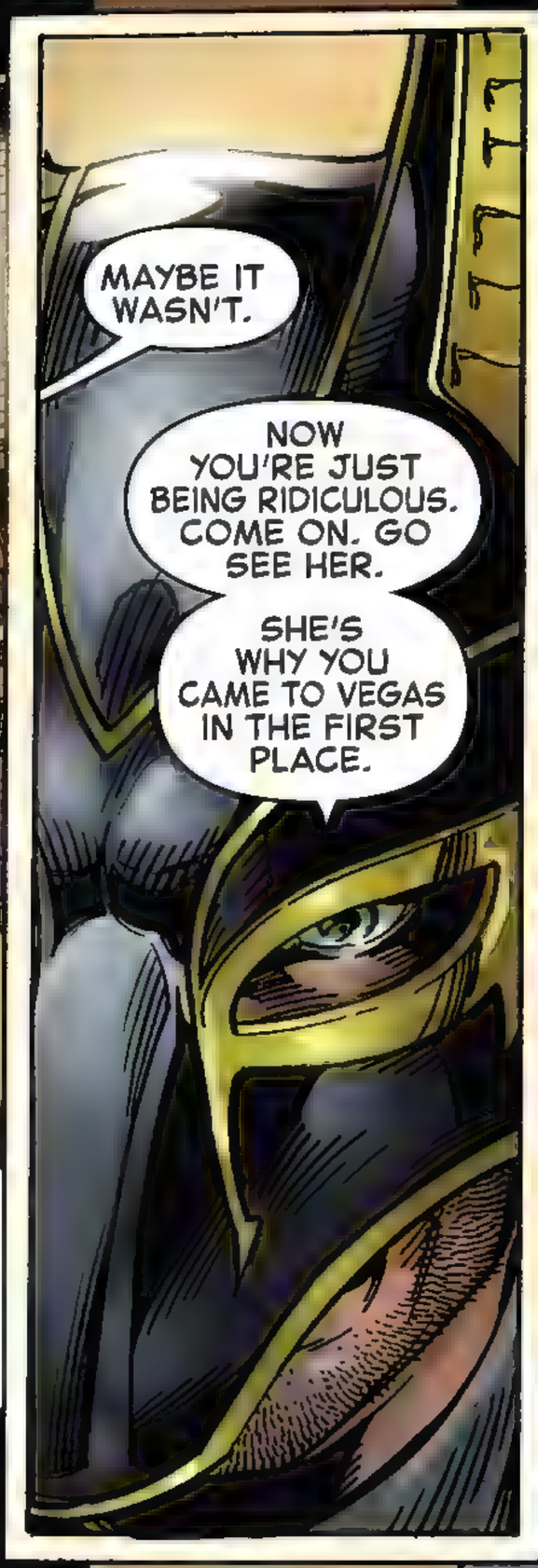

...TELL ME WHERE HE IS.

GO TO HELL.
ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, YOU'RE GOING TO TELL ME.
HAH. YOU'RE A SUPER HERO. I'D LIKE TO SEE YOU TRY.

I'M NOT.
AND YOU WON'T.


LAS VEGAS.
NICE TO KNOW YOU STILL REMEMBER ME.

OH, I'LL NEVER FORGET YOU. TRUST ME.
YOU'RE NOT ASHAMED OF WHAT WE DID, I HOPE.
I DID WHAT I THOUGHT WAS *RIGHT*.
THAT'S REALLY WHY EVERYONE DOES ANYTHING, FROM DRIVING TOO FAST TO CHEATING ON YOUR LOVER.
IT SEEMED LIKE A GOOD IDEA AT THE TIME.


MAYBE IT WASN'T.
NOW YOU'RE JUST BEING RIDICULOUS. COME ON. GO SEE HER.
SHE'S WHY YOU CAME TO VEGAS IN THE FIRST PLACE.

WHAT--?!
WHAT THE HELL!

YOU THINK YOU WALK AWAY FROM ME THAT EASY? YOU THINK JUST BY DESTROYING THAT MASK, YOU CAN DESTROY THE JACKAL?
IT'S NOT *THAT* EASY, BEN. NOT THAT EASY BY A LONG--

How... could you...?
SEEMED LIKE A GOOD IDEA AT THE TIME.
SCHMUCK.

THERE IT IS: *MERCURY RISING.*

ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR CASINOS AND HOTELS ON THE STRIP.

IF I HAD ALL THE MONEY IN THE WORLD, I WOULD DEFINITELY SET UP A PLACE LIKE THIS.

AND I WOULD TOTALLY HAVE *THAT* LOOMING OVER THE LOBBY.

WELL, A STATUE OF *ME*, NOT OF *HER*.

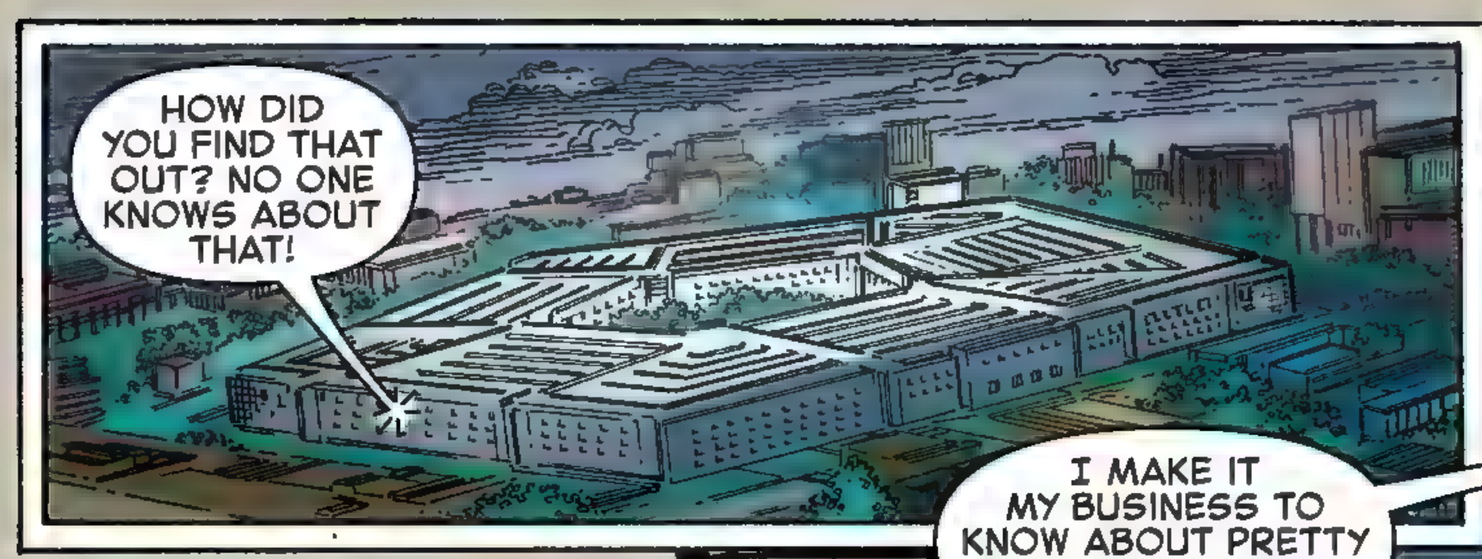
CASSANDRA MERCURY. ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL WOMEN IN THE WORLD. RIGHT UP THERE WITH...

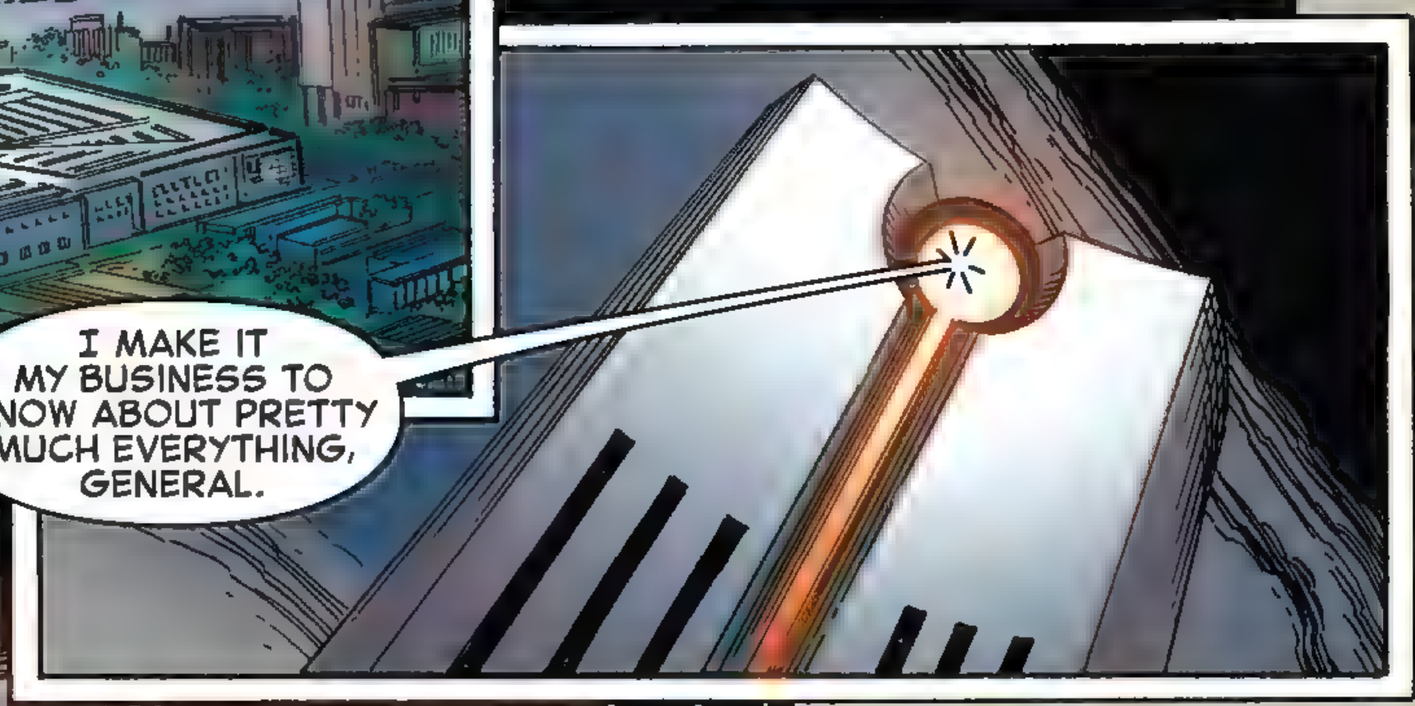
WELL, SHE'S NOT POWERFUL LIKE CAPTAIN MARVEL. OR STORM.

OR ANYONE ELSE WHO WAS BORN INTO IT OR HAD A HAPPY ACCIDENT TO TRANSFORM THEM.

NO, I GUESS SHE'S MORE OF A "SELF-MADE" POWERFUL.

WHICH DOESN'T MAKE HER ANY LESS DANGEROUS. IN FACT, IN SOME RESPECTS, SHE'S *MORE* SO.


HOW DID YOU FIND THAT OUT? NO ONE KNOWS ABOUT THAT!


I MAKE IT MY BUSINESS TO KNOW ABOUT PRETTY MUCH EVERYTHING, GENERAL.

WH-WHAT DO YOU WANT?
AT THE MOMENT? NOTHING.
NOTHING? BUT...AREN'T YOU BLACKMAILING ME?

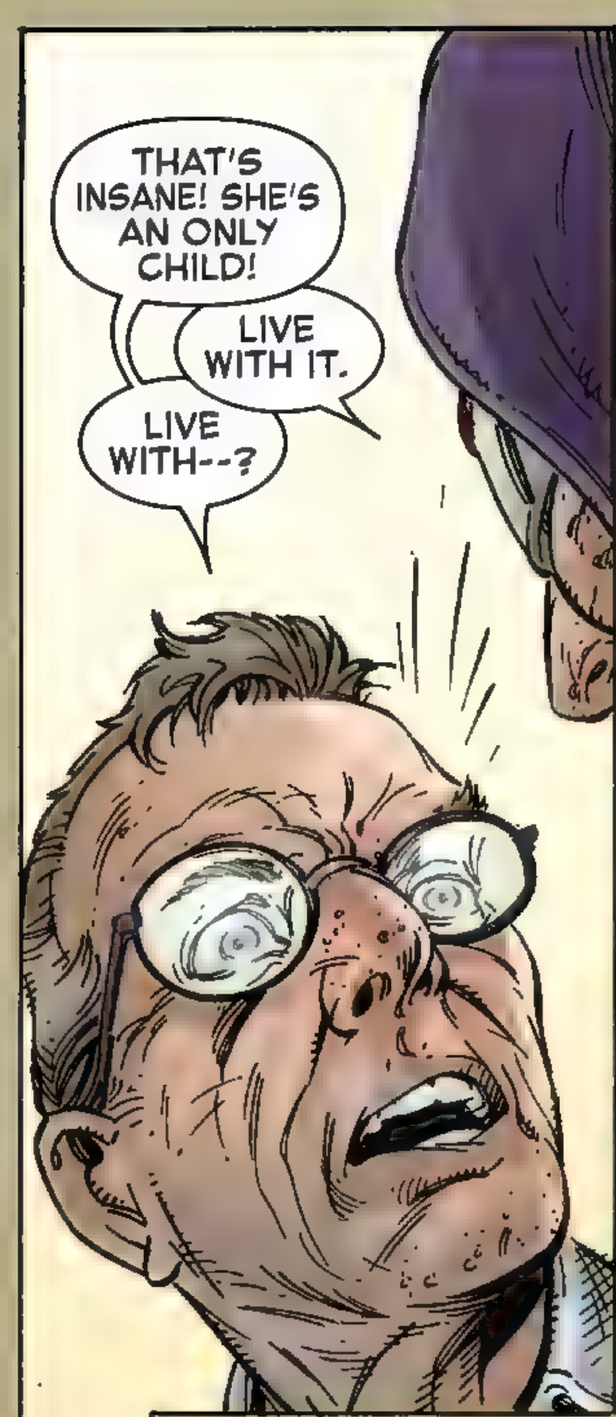
GOOD HEAVENS, NO. I'M SIMPLY INFORMING YOU THAT I KNOW.
AND IN THE FUTURE, SHOULD WE CROSS PATHS, I WANT YOU TO REMEMBER THAT.
THAT'S CLEAR, ISN'T IT?
Y...YES.

PHONE CALL GO OKAY, MS. MERCURY?

SUCH A SWEET MAN, ONCE YOU GET TO KNOW HIM.
HOW'S THE GAMING FLOOR?
I'M HEADED DOWN THERE SHORTLY. FIGURED I'D STOP BY FIRST.

CHECKING IN ON ME? YOU'VE BEEN SO SWEET SINCE ABIGAIL PASSED, SLATE, BUT YOUR CONCERN IS UNNECESSARY.
NOW, GET DOWN THERE AND KEEP MY MONEY SAFE.
YOU GOT IT.

IMPRESSIVE PLACE. TONS OF PEOPLE STUFFING MONEY INTO THE POCKETS OF THE HOUSE.
HOW DO THEY NOT UNDERSTAND THAT THEY'LL NEVER--
THAT'S ENOUGH, JUNE.
JUNE?
NOT "MAY," BUT...IT'S CLOSE.
AND, OH JEEZ, LOOK AT HER.
JUNE, THIS IS INSANE! DO YOU KNOW HOW LONG IT TOOK ME TO FIND YOU HERE?
YOU HAVE TO STOP THIS! YOU HAVE TO COME HOME!
JUNE!
THAT'S ENOUGH. LET HER GO.
WHAT--?
I'M HER HUSBAND!
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?!
YOU MEAN YOU DON'T RECOGNIZE ME?
I'M HER NEPHEW.

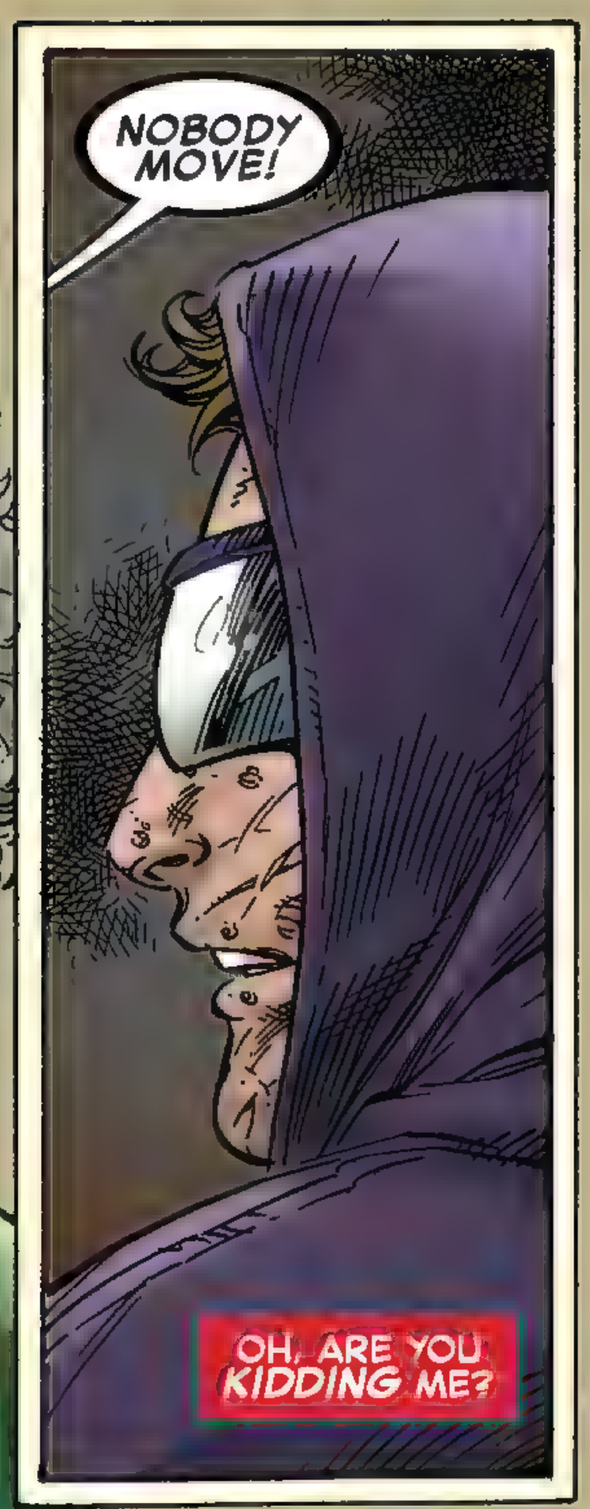

THAT'S INSANE! SHE'S AN ONLY CHILD!
LIVE WITH IT.
LIVE WITH--?

FINE! I'M DONE WITH HER!
YOU WANT HER? YOU'VE GOT HER!
I'M DEAD TO HER!

YOU HEAR THAT, JUNE? I'M DEAD TO YOU!
YOUR NAME WOULDN'T BE "BEN," WOULD IT?
NO!

WELL, OKAY. NOT BEN, BUT HE'S DEAD, SO CLOSE ENOUGH.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT HIM, AUNT JUNE. I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU.

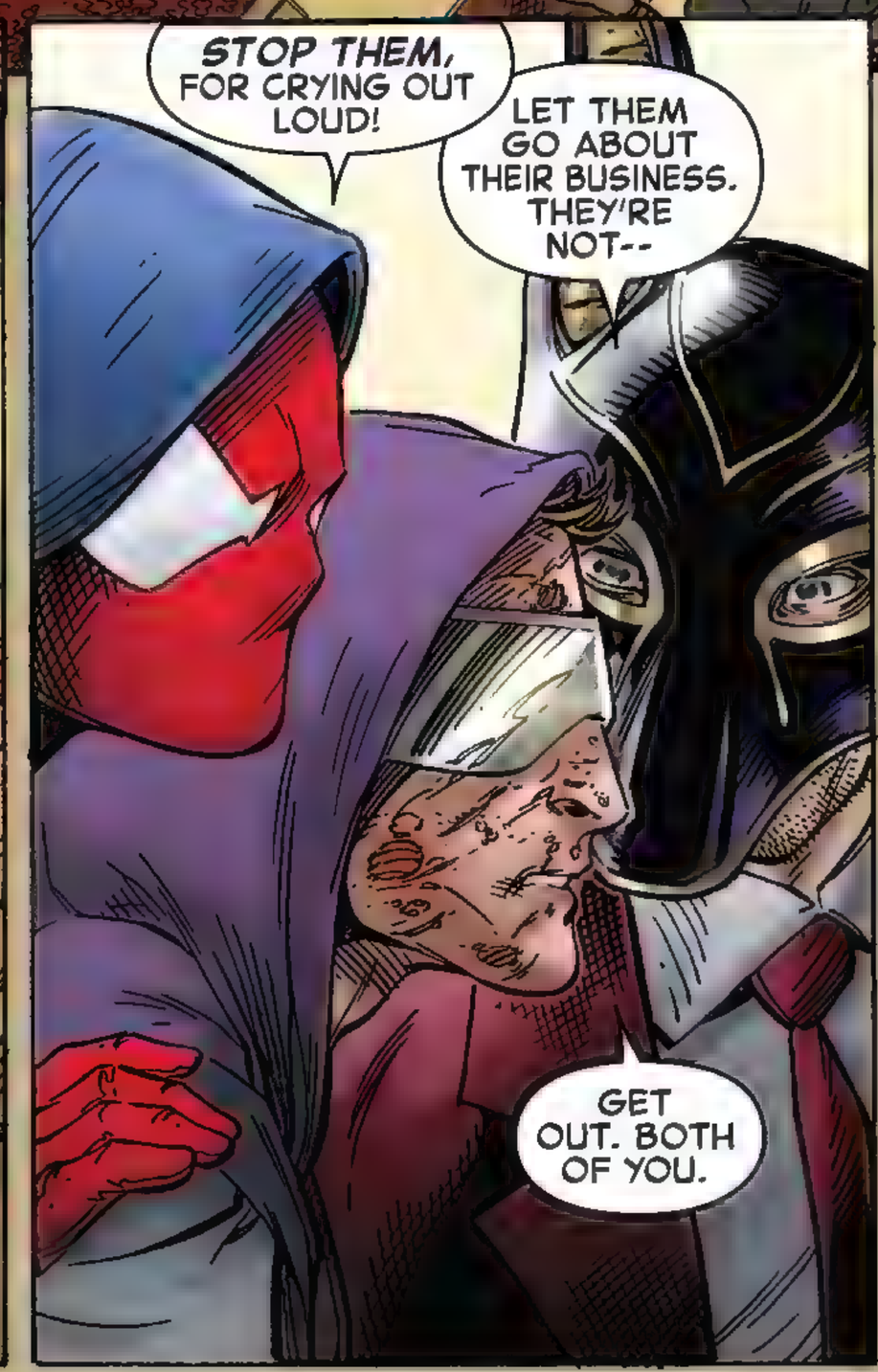
CAN I GET YOU ANYTHING, AUNT JUNE?
SHUT UP.


NOBODY MOVE!
OH, ARE YOU KIDDING ME?

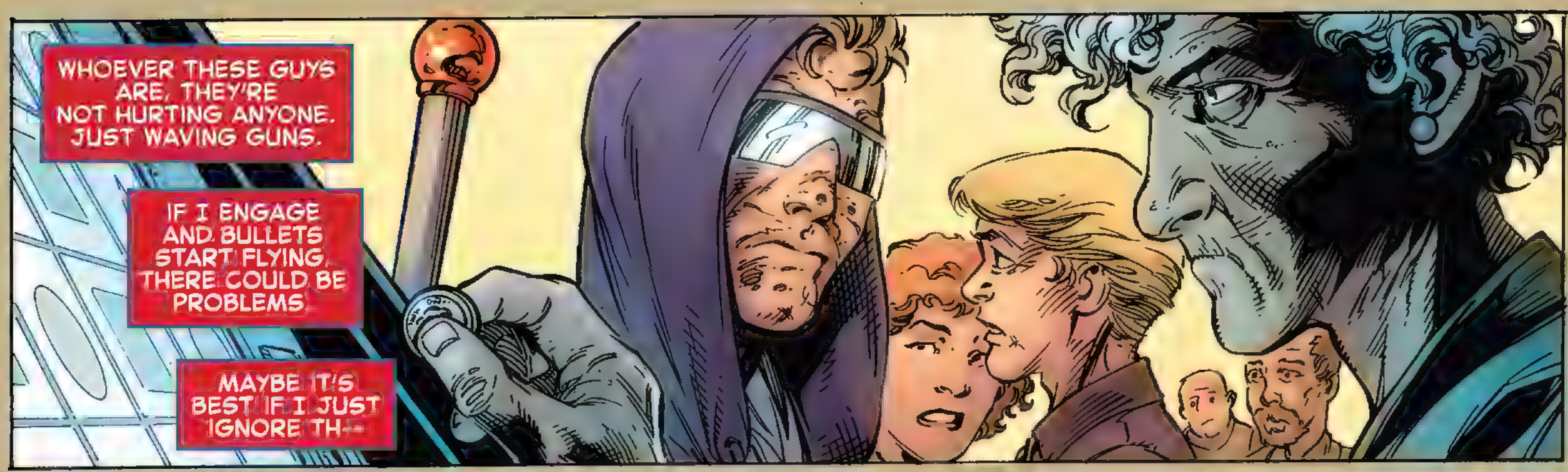
I SAID...
...NOBODY MOVE!
OTHER PEOPLE WALK INTO A CASINO, AND THEY GAMBLE. HAVE A GOOD TIME.

THAT'S GOOD! MAKE LIKE STATUES!
WE'RE GONNA SAVE YOU ALL SOME TIME, PEOPLE! YOU WANT TO GET RID OF YOUR MONEY? YOU'RE GOING TO GIVE IT ALL TO US! RIGHT NOW!
ME, I WALK IN AND MINUTES LATER, GUYS SHOW UP LOOKING TO PULL A HEIST.
IT'S LIKE HOW IN THE OLD DAYS I COULDN'T SWING BY A BANK WITHOUT A ROBBERY GOING OFF.
DON'T WORRY, AUNT JUNE. IT'S ALL GONNA BE OKAY.
AUNT JUNE?
SHUT UP.

SO WHAT DO I DO NOW?


STOP THEM, FOR CRYING OUT LOUD!
LET THEM GO ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS. THEY'RE NOT--
GET OUT. BOTH OF YOU.

FINE. YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN FROM NOW ON.
RIGHT. SCREW YOU.


WHOEVER THESE GUYS ARE, THEY'RE NOT HURTING ANYONE. JUST WAVING GUNS.
IF I ENGAGE AND BULLETS START FLYING, THERE COULD BE PROBLEMS.
MAYBE IT'S BEST IF I JUST IGNORE TH--

YOUR WALLET.
I DON'T HAVE ONE.

FINE, WHATEVER. COME ON, OLD LADY.
DUDE, ARE YOU KIDDING? LOOK AT HER!
FINE.
NO! MINE!

BE QUIET! I SAID BE--

NO!

KRAAAK

EEEYAARRRHH!

NO ONE THREATENS AUNT JUNE.

YOU OKAY, AUNT JUNE?

GET OUT OF THE WAY! YOU'RE STANDING ON MY QUARTERS!

TAPAS BAR

KILL HIM!

ON IT!

NOT A LOT OF OPTIONS HERE.

I START BOUNCING AROUND OR WEBBING, EVERYONE'S GONNA THINK I'M SPIDER-MAN.

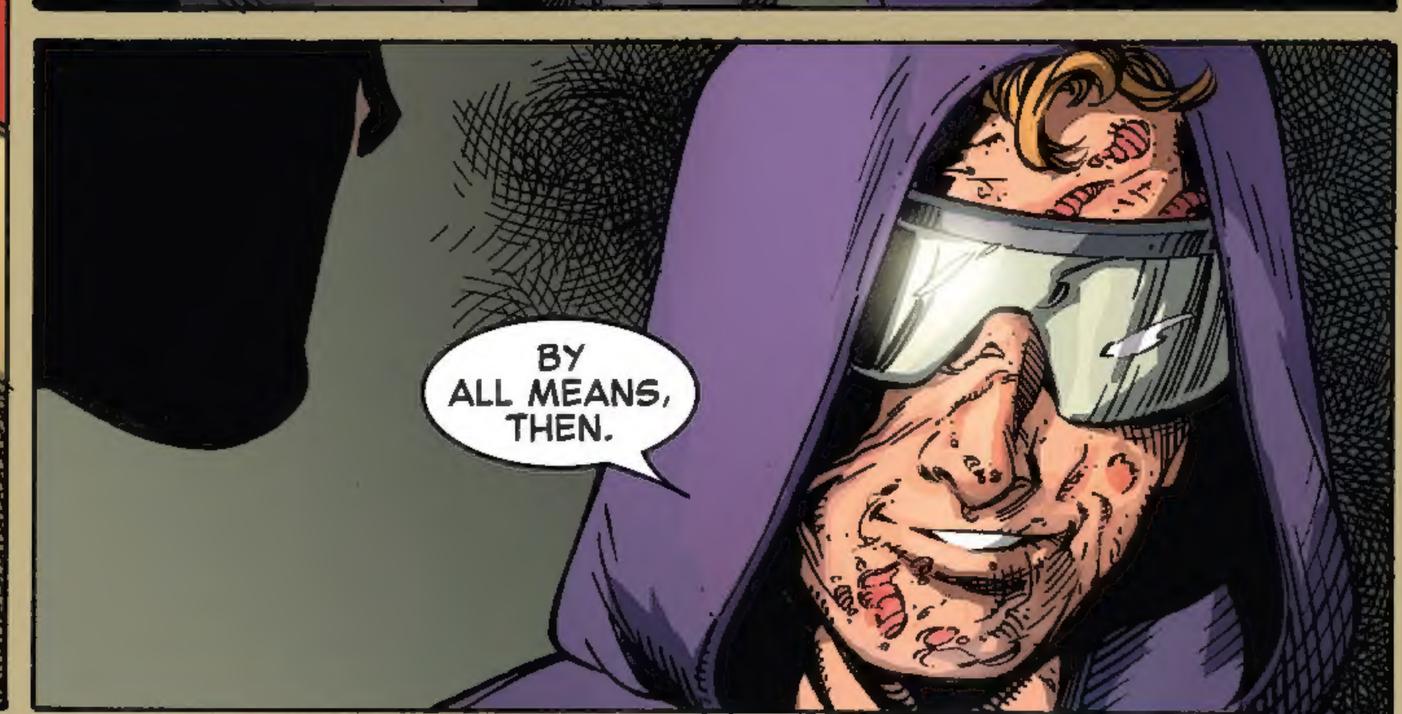
AND ONCE WORD GETS TO PETER, HE'S GONNA KNOW THAT HE WASN'T HERE, WHICH WILL MAKE HIM WONDER WHO IT IS.

WHICH MEANS I AM ONCE AGAIN BONED.

BUDDA BUDDA
BUDDA BUDDA
DOWN!
HUH?
BUDDA BUDDA
BUDDA BUDDA
I'LL BE DAMNED
WHAT THE HELL--?!
QUICK! GRENADES!
NOT QUICK ENOUGH.
HOLY CRAP. WHO THE HELL IS THAT GUY?!

IT'S ALL OVER, FOLKS. POLICE ARE ON THEIR WAY.

NICE TRICK. CARE TO TELL ME HOW YOU DID IT?
MIRRORS.
I SUSPECT MY BOSS WOULD LIKE TO KNOW.
AND YOUR BOSS IS...?
HER NAME'S ON THIS BUILDING.


BY ALL MEANS, THEN.

WILL YOU BE OKAY HERE, AUNT JUNE?
HM.

OKAY, THEN.
I CAN'T FEEL MY ARM.

SHUT UP.

SO WHAT HAVE WE HERE?
PLEASE, TAKE OFF YOUR JACKET AND SUNGLASSES. MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME.
ACTUALLY, I'M GOING TO LEAVE THEM ON, IF THAT'S OKAY.
THAT VOICE. I KNOW YOU.
YOU'RE THE JACKAL.
NOT REALLY GOING BY THAT NAME ANYMORE. YOU CAN CALL ME...
PETER.
AND I NEED YOUR HELP.
WHY IN GOD'S NAME SHOULD I HELP YOU?
FOR STARTERS, I HEALED YOUR DAUGHTER.
MY ABIGAIL IS DEAD. THAT... THAT THING YOU REPLACED HER WITH WASN'T HER.
IT FOOLED ME AT FIRST, BUT WHEN IT...
MY GOD, IT PAINS ME TO EVEN THINK OF IT.
I'VE BEEN PRAYING FOR THE CHANCE TO KILL THE MAN WHO INFLICTED THAT TORTURE ON MY DAUGHTER, AND HERE YOU ARE.
OH YEAH.
THIS IS GOING GREAT.
TO BE CONTINUED!

SCARLET LETTERS

Send e-mail to SPIDEYOFFICE@MARVEL.COM (please mark as OKAY TO PRINT)
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BEN REILLY IS BACK IN THE HOOD!

Hello, Spider-Philes! Spider-Office Associate Editor and known Ben Reilly maniac Devin Lewis reporting to you live and in print from Marvel Comics in the heart of New York!

As I write this, it's the first real day of spring here in the Big Apple, and it somehow seems fitting to be working on the first issue of BEN REILLY: THE SCARLET SPIDER. Spring is a time for rebirth, and who deserves a shot at reinvention more than Ben Reilly? If there's a more deserving character in the Spider-Family, I can't think of 'im.

And what better writer to shepherd Ben into this new era than veteran Spider-Scribe Peter David? Devoted Spidey fans will recognize Peter's name from, well, a BUNCH of terrific Marvel comics from over the years, but most recently he took a turn revisiting the life and times of Miguel O'Hara, your favorite time-displaced wall-crawling web-slinger, in the ongoing SPIDER-MAN 2099 series. If you call yourself a Spidey-fan and you ain't reading it, you're missing out!

And how about Mark Bagley on penciling duties for this puppy? Mark's a legend in comics, and it's books like this that show you exactly why! To start with, there aren't many artists in the biz who can stage and draw an action scene like Mark. You want big, bombastic super hero action, with explosions and a guy in a skintight hooded leotard? Mark's your man! And, maybe most important, Mark's characters are just so darn CHARMING. Of course, it's always a big help when you're working off of great scripts like the ones Peter's been sending our way!

Speaking of scripts--the story Peter and Mark are cooking up for all you fans out there in Mighty Marveldom is something really special. It's chock-full of familiar faces, a few fan-favorite big-league Spidey villains, and even some new characters who'll be making their debuts in the pages of this very funny book! Just like this issue, the whole story Peter and Mark are crafting together will have something for everybody, and it'll feel right at home with the rest of your Spidey books each and every week! Peter's just submitted the script for our FIFTH issue and Mark is about to wrap up the penciling on #4!

And if you're a fan of a certain blue hoodie, keep your eyes peeled. I think you'll like what we've got up our sleeve!

All right--that's it for me! That spring day is still springing along, so I'm gonna go make the most of it. But while I'm gone, why not feast your eyes on the cover to our next issueon sale in one month! While you wait, you should try and hunt down this terrific variant cover by John Tyler Christopher! Look! It's The Scarlet Spider as a little action figure -- and what's that he's wearing? Over and out!

Over and out!
Devin
@edevinlewis

ZONE